

Oxford and *The Arte of English Poesie*

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³ In my book *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of "Shakespeare": The Literary Life of Edward de Vere in Context* (McFarland 2011), I suggested that Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589, hereinafter *Arte*¹) could be an important piece of evidence in the process of establishing the actual date of many of Shakespeare's plays or early versions of them, because of its numerous references to already existing works, including those plays. At the time of writing I was able to use W.L. Rushton's little book,² but I did not have access to Whigham and Rebhorn's more recent critical edition, which has rendered previous studies of *Arte* obsolete. This paper owes a great deal to both works, but of course both are locked into the "orthodox" ideas of dating and attribution of the plays, and so I am trying to unlock that erroneous connection.

There is some doubt as to the authorship of *Arte*; I follow Whigham and Rebhorn and do not consider the validity of the claim of George Puttenham as author.³ The date of publication is vital. The title page tells us that it was printed by Richard Field in 1589, and no one has ever suggested that that date is wrong or that Field ever misdated the title pages of the works he printed.⁴

Nearly as unimportant is the career and character of George Puttenham. He was the worst type of well-born courtly chancer, one who makes the rest of the Elizabethan courtiers look like nineteenth century gentlemen. He made life hell for a number of women who crossed his path and his general attitude towards them can be evidenced from *Arte*. To what extent was a Puttenham a scholar? Why did he venture upon his great work? The answer clearly was, to assist in his campaign to re-establish himself in the good books of the Queen. In *Arte* he flatters her grossly, quoting some eleven times from his earlier work *Partheniades* (Serenade to the Virgin Queen, c. 1579), a collection of seventeen poems which had failed (even if it had ever reached her) to sway her. In *Arte* he also sought to impress her as a polymath with the sweep of his scholarship. He spent time at Christ's College Cambridge and the Inns of

Court. It is not necessarily a mark against him that he is not recorded as being given a degree, as this was quite common. He would have attained a good standard in both Latin and perhaps Greek. There must, however, be a substantial question mark over the scholarship and originality in *Arte*. He did own at one time some one hundred books, likely to include a number of works on grammar and poetical collections; from these (or from those to which he had access) he quotes with accuracy. His knowledge of Greek seems to be quite limited, as he uses Latin translations for Theocritus, Aristotle and Plato: as a typical show-off he sets out the first line of the *Iliad* (Book 3, Chapter 24) and occasionally scatters the odd Greek word to maintain what may well be an illusion. Puttenham owned a number of books of French and Italian literature and shows his familiarity with those genres.

If this view seems harsh, we ought next to look at those Latin sources. Of the 121 “tropes” and “figures” identified by Puttenham, 115 come unacknowledged from *Epitome Troporum ac Schematicum* (1540) by Johannes Susenbrotus (1485-1543), a German Grammarian, and the remaining six from two other works. Puttenham attempts to disguise his total indebtedness to these writers for their classifications, but Whigham and Rebhorn effectively destroy any claim to scholarly originality.⁵ Well educated classicists like the Queen and Oxford would readily have seen through that disguise, even though Puttenham suggests alternative English names for some of the tropes and figures. Puttenham’s originality lies in mixing the grammatical critique with a dissertation on contemporary good behavior, illustrated by a swath of stories from the court about current and past rulers and those who served them, the latter mostly taken from Erasmus.⁶

In Chapter 31 of Book 1 *The Arte* reviews English poetry to date, beginning with Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Langland, Hardyng “the chronicler,” and, coming into the current century, Skelton, Wyatt and Surrey. For Wyatt (eight quotations and three possible adaptations), Surrey (nine), “anonymous” (eight quotations and adaptations), and Vaux (adaptation), Puttenham is clearly using *Tottel’s Miscellany* (1567 and later editions). *The Arte* claims authorship for the Vaux and one of the anonymous adaptations. Then he comes up to date with the famous quotation beloved of all Oxfordians:

And in her Majesty’s time that is now there is sprung up another crew of courtly makers, noblemen and gentlemen of her Majesty’s own servants, who have written excellently well, as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest. Of which number is first that noble gentleman Edward Earl of Oxford, Thomas Lord of Buckhurst when he was young, Henry Lord Paget, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, Master Edward Dyer, Master Fulke Greville, Gascoigne, Breton, Turberville, and a great many other learned gentlemen, whose names I do not omit for envy [dislike], but to avoid tediousness, and who have deserved no little commendation.

(1.31)

The same chapter commends the poetry, “eclogue and pastoral poetry [of] Sir Philip Sidney and master Chaloner and that other gentleman who wrote the late *Shepherd’s Calendar*.....Phaer and Golding for a learned and well-corrected verse, especially in translation.... But last in recital but first in degree is the Queen....” However, the author has clearly heard or seen Sonnet XIV of Sidney’s *Certain Sonnets* in manuscript: from it he misremembers the line “For true it is, that they fear many whom many fear” as “Fear many must he needs, whom many fear” (319).

Puttenham quotes from Oxford, “a most noble and learned gentleman ... for his excellence and wit [intelligence, wisdom, cleverness],” twelve lines from “When wert thou born, Desire?” (3.19). For the others Puttenham quotes Sidney, Raleigh, and Dyer three times each, Gascoigne five times,⁷ Turberville nine times, and the Queen three times. Ten further anonymous quotations and references come from *Tottel’s Miscellany*. From the list at 1.31 above he omits Sir Arthur Gorges, but quotes him once.

All these are from the “crew of courtly makers,” and Puttenham would most likely want us to add his name to this list. In addition to the eleven citations from *Partheniades*, there are four scraps from works which have not otherwise survived and at least twenty-three others from unknown and untitled works; Whigham and Rebhorn maintain that many of the latter were “surely composed expressly as examples for the *Arte*” (16).

Before we turn to dramatic poetry, there is one further example, not by a courtly gentleman, which is castigated by Puttenham as *Soriasmus* or Mingle-Mangle,

as when we make our speech or writings of sundry languages, using some Italian word, or French, or Spanish, or Dutch, or Scottish, not for the nonce [particular purpose] or for any purpose (which were in part excusable) but ignorantly and affectedly. As one that said, using the French word *roy* to make rhyme with another verse, thus:

O mighty Lord of Love, dame Venus’ only joy.
Whose princely power exceeds each other heavenly roy.

(Turberville: “The Lover to Cupid for Mercie,” *Epitaphs and Epigrams* [1567] 45r-v: 1-4)

The verse is good, but the term peevishly [foolishly] affected. Another of reasonable quality in translation, finding certain of the hymns of Pindar and Anacreon’s odes and other lyrics among the Greeks well translated by Ronsard the French poet and applied in the honour of a great Prince [Henry II] in France, comes our minion and translates the same out of French into English, and applieth them to the honour of a great nobleman in England (wherein I commend his reverent mind and duty).

(3.22)

The “minion” is John Soothern, believed to be a Frenchman, a follower of Lord Oxford and a sometime spy for Oxford at the French Court, whose English might not have satisfied Puttenham’s high standards. In 1584 Soothern published his long poem *Pandora*. Ode I is the dedicatory ode to Oxford, and in my book I quoted a long extract. Puttenham writes: “our said maker not being ashamed to use these French words—freddon, egar, superbous, filanding, celeste, calabrois, thebanois, and a number of others.” “Celeste” does not appear in Ode I but the others do, and Puttenham misses out some fairly obvious such as “brute (bruit),” “digne” and “louanges.” The suspicion arises that Puttenham was relying on his memory and did not have the work at hand, though he quotes two couplets and a further single line with accuracy save that Soothern’s word “fredone” appears as the more anglicized (and less effective from the point of view of Puttenham’s argument) “freddon.”



We may now consider dramatic poetry. The first point is that writing for the stage was considered beyond the social pale for any aristocrat; no names of dramatists are included as authors of any of the excerpts or references employed by Puttenham. For Latin he introduces his own free translations. Thus he purloins without acknowledgement the *Medea* of the pioneer Latin dramatist Ennius and puts the Nurse’s opening speech in the mouth of Medea herself:

“Woe worth the mountain that the mast bare
Which was the first causer of all my care.” 3.17.

This displays a faint recollection of the speech, which is accurately translated:

“Would that the firwood timbers had not fallen to earth hewn by axes in a Pelian grove [on mount Pelion]; and that thereupon no prelude had been made to begin the ship.... For thus never would my misled mistress Medea sick at heart, smitten by savage love, have set foot outside her home.”⁸

In the same way he treats Gager’s Latin *Dido* (1583):

“Hie thee, and by the wild waves and wind
Seek Italy and realms for thee to reign
If piteous gods have power amidst the main
On ragged rocks thy penance thou may find.”

(3.20)

Puttenham is clearly writing from memory, as the accurate translation⁹ reads: “Go follow the winds, seek you kingdom by crossing the waves, the ocean to the land promised to you by the fates. If prayers and entreaties have any power, I am confident

you will pay the penalty for this outrage, grounded on shoals and reefs, or bobbing your head among your smashed hulls crying for me....” The first couplet is reasonably accurate but the second is sketchy indeed.¹⁰

The only exceptions to Puttenham’s rule of not mentioning current dramatists come at the end of Book I: “Of the later sort [of poets] I think thus: that for tragedy, the Lord Buckhurst and Master Edward [*sic*, he means George] Ferrers for such doings as I have seen of theirs do deserve the highest price. The Earl of Oxford and Master Edwards of her Majesty’s Chapel for comedy and interlude....”

He then goes back to discussing poets.

The only dramatist *qua* dramatist from whom he quotes by name is himself. These quotations are the only bits from the plays which survive and a cynic might think that the plays did not otherwise exist: from *Ginecocratia* a comedy, four lines; from *Lusty London* an “Interlude,” two quotations of four lines each; and from *The Wooer*, also an “Interlude,” two quotations, one of two lines and one of four lines. Apart from *Partheniades*, there are perhaps a dozen more quotations and references from other works all otherwise totally lost. In addition, to illustrate his tropes and figures, he includes snippets of self-identifying poetry and from some others he omits any self-identifying label. These passages are left anonymous, but the way they are used may well lead us suspect that they could be Puttenham’s self-produced examples.

The most important point is that all these references are from works that existed in 1589: Puttenham, I maintain, is the taker, not the exemplar. In order to keep the show on the road, as my correspondence with Professor Wiggins (above) demonstrates, “orthodoxy” is forced to demonstrate that none of the other references below is from an existing work: the Shakespearean ones must all have been taken (by Shakespeare) from *Arte*. Such is the volume of these references that orthodoxy requires us to imagine the opposite of that piece of Saintsbury’s wisdom epitomized by this quotation:

When a man writes...a good piece of prose [let alone dramatic verse], he does not say to himself, ‘Now I shall throw in some hyperbaton; now we shall exhibit a little anadiplosis; this is the occasion, surely for a passage of zeugma. He writes as the spirit moves him and the way of art leads.

This vital point entirely escaped W.L. Rushton in 1909: the value of his book is that he does pick, first in a few pieces of poetry and then in a quantity of Puttenham’s critical apparatus, references to Shakespeare’s plays. There are no absolutely accurate renditions—indeed, with none of the plays in print, it would be surprising if there were: Puttenham presumably relies on his memory. The following plays are those commonly referred to, and after each I have put in a putative Oxfordian date¹¹ and the number of references: *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (1581, twenty-nine references), *Hamlet* (1586, twenty-eight), *Henry V* (1584, fifteen), *Richard III* (1582, fourteen), *Richard II* (1582, thirteen), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1577, eleven) and *Troilus and Cressida* (1584, ten). There are no references to *Titus*

Andronicus, *Pericles* or *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (perhaps because Rushton did not accept them as by Shakespeare), or to *King Lear*. For several plays only one reference is cited, and few of them are at all impressive: *All's Well That Ends Well* (1581, but possibly never actually performed contemporaneously because of the too obvious connection with Oxford's own marital problems), *1 Henry VI* (1586, perhaps not accepted by Rushton), *Henry VIII* (perhaps also not accepted by Rushton and probably written too late, i.e., after 1589), *Measure for Measure*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Tempest* (all written too late).¹² That leaves the remainder of the canon with between two and eight references each.

These are vital pieces of evidence for the actual date of the writing of early version(s) of the plays mentioned. Some modern critics advance the problems of "intertextuality": in short, the determination of who borrowed from whom, e.g., was it "Shakspeare" who borrowed from Nashe, or Nashe who borrowed from "Shakespeare," or both possibilities? In the case of Puttenham this "intertextuality" does not apply: Puttenham unlike the vast majority of contemporary authors is not writing a composition or a history, he is writing a compendium, a digest of grammatical usages which he claims to have identified from literature in English, all of which must be in existence by 1589 for him to extract the material for the examples of his "figures." I repeat that, for poetry as contrasted with dramatic verse, Puttenham seems happy to identify his source: it is only when he comes to dramatic verse and to "Shakespeare" that he becomes silent as to his sources: perhaps it was beneath his dignity to identify these sources when the 'low' class art of drama was concerned. The dry cataloguing of *Arte* has nothing by way of quotation or inspiration to offer the artist/writer, be he/she poet, dramatist, historian or even critic, when material full of life and vigour can be borrowed or stolen from contemporaries of genius. Puttenham is not writing for the applause of contemporary writers: he is writing to boost his standing among the Elizabethan cultural upper class. In his Conclusion he claims to "write to the pleasure of a Lady and a most gracious Queen, and neither to priests nor to prophets or philosophers," let alone to poets, dramatists, historians or critics, save to instruct them, as in the terms of the quotation in n.3 below.

The contrary (or 'intertextuality') idea that "Shakespeare" and his fellows had *Arte* on their desks as they wrote, ready to consult whenever they wished to throw in a piece of hyperbaton, exhibit some anadiplosis or zeugma in their compositions, as Saintsbury put it, flies in the face of common sense. Indeed "Shakespeare" seems implicitly to rule this out with his well-known anathematising of small beer and grammar rules, to the extent in (no doubt) one of the post-1589 rewrites of *Love's Labours Lost* (IV.i.60-92) in Armado's love-letter to the simple peasant-girl Jaquenetta he includes Puttenham's 'figures' of Asyndeton, Synarithmeticus, Anthypopora, Emphasis, Parenthesis and Periergia (and no doubt others if one had the energy and ingenuity to track them down). *Arte* is unlikely to have been available to any, say, of the University wits, and perhaps would only swim into the ken of a writer in the position of Oxford.

Two words of caution must be here introduced. First, some of Rushton's more than 250 references are pretty slight; if I were writing his book I might not have included many of them. Individually few of them prove anything, but the sheer volume of them shows that Puttenham's mind was susceptible to the small amount of English literature available: he may not have had printed volumes to hand (there were none of Shakespeare in 1589, as far as we know) but he did have access from time to time to the court and to the great houses where the plays were performed. This puts him among a very small band of writers able to take in these quotations which he could have read in manuscript or heard read or declaimed aloud. Second, I have not identified any references from plays which are juvenilia and were clearly written before 1589 (except one rather feeble one which occurs in both *Arden of Feversham* and *Thomas of Woodstock*), although I have tried but failed to find cross-references to *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John* and *The True Tragedy of Richard III*. That is most likely the fault of my defective literary self-education and may yet afford a qualified student a richer source for investigation; or it may be that the more sophisticated later versions had made their appearance at court by 1589, replacing the first efforts in Puttenham's memory, and possibly making his version difficult to link and identify.

There are in Rushton's book some twenty pieces of Puttenham's poetry, which are unrelated (with possible exceptions to his own dramatic works as he indicates) to anything else written by him, but recycled with a cunning layer of paste to disassociate them from the poetry of any play, Shakespeare's thought or his words or turn of phrase. Some of the more obvious ones would include:

Hypozeugma

Richard II, II.ii.53-55

The lord Northumberland, his son young Henry Percy,
The lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby,
With their powerful *friends*, *are fled* to him.

Arte 3.11

My mates are wont to keep me company,
And my neighbours, who dwelt near to my wall,
The friends that swore they would not stick to die
In my quarrel: they *are fled* from me all.

Anadiplosis

Richard III, V.v., 213-214

If you do fight in safeguard of your *wives*,
Your *wives* shall welcome home the
conquerors.

Arte 3.19

Comfort it is for man to have a wife,
Wife chaste, and wise, and lowly all her
life

Epizeuxis

A Midsummer Night's Dream, V.i.319ff

Asleep, my love?
What, dead my love ?
These lily lips,
This cherry nose
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone
Lovers, make moan.

Arte 3.19

The chiefest staff of mine assured stay,
With no small grief, *is gone, is gone* away.

Prosonomasia 1

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, II.v.36-40

Speed. But, Launce, how sayest thou, that my master is become a notable *lover*?

Launce. I never knew him otherwise.

Speed. Than how?

Launce. A notable *lubber* as thou reportest him to be.

Arte 3.19

They be *lubbers* not *lovers* that so used to say.
From the allegedly lost drama *The Wooer*.

Prosonomasia 2

Richard III, I.ii.81-85

Gloucester. Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have/Some patient leisure to excuse myself

Anne. Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make/No current *excuse* but to hang thyself.

Gloucester. By such despair I should *accuse* myself.

Arte: 3.19

Prove me, madam, ere you fall to reprove,
Meek minds should rather *excuse* than *accuse*.

Insultatio

Antony and Cleopatra, III.vii.61-62

O most noble emperor, do not fight by sea;
Trust not to rotten *planks*

Arte 3.19

Go now and give thy life unto the wind
Trusting unto a piece of bruckle [brittle] wood,
Four inches from thy death or seven good
The thickest *plank* for shipboard that we find.

Antimetabole

King John, II.i.500-501

Arte 3.19

...The shadow of your son/Becomes a sun, and
makes your son a shadow.

We wish not peace to maintain cruel war
But we make war to maintain us in peace.

Puttenham uses as his (own) example “Ye have
figure which takes a couple of words to play with
in a verse, and by making them to change and
shift one into others place; they do very prettily
exchange and shift the sense..”

Rushton’s remaining references, and there are more than 230 of them (see my caveat
above), come from Puttenham’s critical apparatus, which he attaches to each trope or
figure:

Poets as the first priests, etc.

2 Henry VI, III.iii.19

O Thou *eternal mover of the heavens*

Henry V, II.ii.118

If that same *demon* that has gulled thee thus

Antony and Cleopatra, II.ii.17-20

That *demon* (that’s thy spirit which keeps thee) is/
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Caesar’s is not: but near him, thy *angel*
Becomes a fear, as being o’erpowered

Arte 1.3

Poets are of great antiquity. Then forasmuch
as they were the first that entended to the
observation of nature and her works and
specially of the Celestial courses, by reason of
the *continual motion of the heavens*, searching
after the first mover, and from thence by
degrees coming to know and consider of the
substances separate and abstract, which we call
devine intelligences or good *Angels (Demes)*,
they were the first.....they came by instinct
devine, and deep meditation.

Poets’ Reputation, etc.

Julius Caesar, II.i.230-232

Thou hast no figures, nor no *fantasies*,
Which *busy* care draws in the brains of men
Therefore sleep’st so sound.

Arte 1.8

For as evil and vicious disposition of the brain
hinders the sound judgment and discourse of
man with *busy* and discordant *fantasies*....

Pastoral Poetry, etc.

1 Henry VI, II.i.91-92

Gadshill, a thief: Give me thy hand: thou shall
have a share in our *purchase*, For I am a true
man....

Arte 1.18

All this I do agree unto, for no doubt the
shepherd’s life was the first example of honest
fellowship, they trade the first art of lawful
acquisition or purchase, for at those days
robbery was a manner of *purchase*...

Epigrams or Posies

Romeo and Juliet, I.v..8

Good, then save me a piece of marchpane

Hamlet, III.ii.14

Is this a prologue, or a poesie of a ring?

Arte 1.30

There be also other like Epigram that were sent usually for new year gifts, or to be printed or put upon their banqueting dishes of sugar plate, or *march paines*... We call them *poesies*... or use them as devices in *rings* and arms about such courtly purposes.

Staff or Stanza

Love's Labour's Lost, IV.ii.104

Let me hear a staff, a stanza, a verse

Arte 2.2

Staff in our vulgar Poesie I know not why it should be called, unless it be that we understand it for a bearer of a song or ballad, not unlike the old weak body that is stayed up by his *staff*, and were not otherwise able to walk or stand upright. The Italians called it *Stanza*, as if we should say a resting place.

Proportion in figure

This is an unlikely piece of literary criticism, as Puttenham seeks to commend “form poetry” in the setting down of geometrically figured poems, and Rushton asks us to believe that Shakespeare considered such a practice for a moment, let alone seriously. Puttenham does, however, show in the example below the effect of Shakespeare’s existing writings.

3 Henry VI, II.iii.48-51

Arte

Yet let us all together to our troops,
And give them leave to fly that will not *stay*
And call them *pillars* that will *stand* to us.

2 Henry VI, I.i.75

Brave peers of England, *pillars* of the state

Troilus and Cressida, IV.vii.94-95

I wonder how yonder city stands,
When we have her *base* and *pillar* by us

The *Pillar* is a figure among all the rest of the Geometrical most beautiful.....By this figure is signified *stay*, support, rest, state and magnificence; your ditty being reduced to the form of a *Pillar*.

Her Majesty resembled to the crowned *pillar*. Ye must read upward:

Is bliss with immortality
Her trimmest top of all you see
Garnish her crown
Her just renown
Chapter and head,
Parts that maintain
And woman head
Her maiden reign
Integrity
In honour and
With verity
Her roundness stand
Strengthen the state.
With their increase
Without debate
Concord and peace
Of her support,
They be the base,
With steadfastness
Vertue and grace
Stay and comfort
Of Albion's rest,
The sounde Pillar
And seen a farre,
Is plainly expressed
Tall, stately and strait
By this noble portrait.
(2.12)

On three syllable feet

I Henry IV, III.i.29-31

And that would set my teeth nothing on edge
Nothing so much as mincing poetry
'Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling nag

Arte 2.16

I rather wish the continuance of our old manner of Poesy, scanning our verses by syllables rather than by feet, and using most commonly the Iambic and sometimes the Trochaic....and now and then a dactyl keeping precisely our sympathy or rime without any other *mincing* measures which an idle inventive head could easily devise.

Ornament

Merchant of Venice, III.ii.73-77

So may the outward shows be least themselves
The world is still deceiv'd with *ornament*.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the *show* of evil?....

Arte 3.3

This *ornament* is of two sorts, one to satisfy and delight the ear only by a goodly outward *show* set upon the matter with words

Epitheton

Love's Labour's Lost, I.ii.13-20

Armado. I spoke it, tender juvenal, as a congruent *epitheton* appertaining to thy young days, which we nominate tender.

Moth. And I, tough senior, as appertinent to your old time, which we may name tough.

Armado. Pretty and *apt*.

Moth. How mean you, sir? I pretty and my saying *apt*? Or I *apt*, and my saying pretty?

Arte 3.16

Your *Epitheton* or Qualifier, whereof we spoke before..... now he serves to alter and enforce the sense, we will say more.....and conclude he must be *apt* and proper for the thing he is added to...

Metaphora

Julius Caesar, I.ii.300-302

This rudeness is sauce to his good wit,
Which gives him stomach to *digest his words*
With better appetite.

Arte 3.17

There is a kindle of wrestling of a single word from his own right significance, to another not so natural, yet of some affinity or convenience with it, as is to say, I cannot *digest your unkind words* for I cannot take them in good part.

Catachresis

I Henry VI, I.iii.14

Lean, raw-bomed *rascals*...

Arte 3.17

or as one should in reproach say to a poor man, thou *raskal* knave, where *raskal* is properly the hunter's term given to a young deer, *lean* and out of season, and not to people.

Atanaclasis

Antony and Cleopatra, V.ii.101-104

Arte 3.19

Would I never
O'ertake pursued success, but I do feel,
By the *rebound* of yours, a grief that *smites*
My very heart at root.

Ye have another figure which by his nature
we may call *Rebound*, alluding to the tennis
ball which being *smitten* by the racket
rebounds back again

Climax.

Troilus and Cressida, I.iii.101ff

O, when degree is shaken,
Which is the *ladder* to all high degree
Then enterprise is sick.....
Then everything includes itself in powerful
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and powerful
Must make perforce an universal prey.....
And this neglect of degree it is
That by a *pace* goes backward, with a purposes
It hath to climb. The general's disdained
One *step* below, he by the next by him

Arte 3.19

Ye have a figure which as well by his Greek
or Latin originals, and also to the manner
of a man's gate or going may be called the
marching figure, for after the first *step* all the
rest proceed, by double the space; and so in our
speech one word proceeds double to the first
that was spoken, and goeth as it were by strides
or *paces*: it may as well be called the Climbing
figure, for Climax is as much to say as a *ladder*.

Insultatio

The Comedy of Errors, II.ii.202-203

Luciana. If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an
ass.
Dromio of Syracuse. 'Tis true; she *rides* me and
I long for grass.

Arte 3.19

Ye have another figure much like to Sarcasmus,
or bitter taunt we spoke of before; and when it
is with proud or insolent words, we do upbraid a
man, or *ride* him, as we term it: for which cause
the Latines also call it Insultatio.

Meiosis

The Winter's Tale, V.ii.161-163

and I'll swear to the prince, thou art *a tall fellow*
with thy hands, and thou wilt not be drunk; but
I know thou art *no tall fellow with thy hands* and
that thou wilt be drunk....

Arte 3.19

We use it again to excuse a fault, and to make
an offence to seem less than it is, by giving a
term more favourable and of less vehemency
than the truth requires, as to say of a great
robbery, that it was but a pilfry matter; of an
arrant ruffian that he is *a tall fellow of his hands*.

Pragmatographia

The Merry Wives of Windsor, IV.v.109-112

Arte 3.19

I was beaten myself into all colours of the rainbow: I was likely to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford: but that my admirable dexterity of wit *my counterfeiting the action* of an old woman, delivered me, the knave constable had set me I' the stocks, i' the common stocks, for a witch.

But if such description be made to represent the handling of any business, with the circumstances belonging thereunto, as in the manner of.....any other matter that lieth in feat and activity, we call it then the *Counterfeit Action*, pragmatographia.

Exargasia

Hamlet, V.ii.11-12

There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how *we will*.

Arte 3.20

Exargasia.... A term transferred from these polishers of marble or porphyrite, who after it is rough hewn, and reduced to that fashion *they will*....

It is interesting that apparently Puttenham takes the *Hamlet* quotation, which much more likely refers to the laying of hedges than stone polishing, and links it to exargasia or polishing, which would not be likely to be in the original English writer's mind.

Barbarismus

Love's Labour's Lost, Vi..73-78

Costard...O, and the heavens were so pleas'd that thou wert but my bastard, what a joyful father wouldst thou make me! Go to, thou hast it *ad dunghill*, at the fingers' end, as they say.

Holofernes. O, I smell false Latin: dunghill for *unguem*.

Costard. Arts-man, perambulate, we will singled from the *barbarous*. Do you not educate youths from the charge house on top of the mountain?

Arte 3.22

The foulest vice in language is to speak *barbarously*....so....when any of their [i.e., the Greeks' and Latins'] own natural words were sounded and pronounced with strange and ill-shaped accents, ... they said it was *barbarously* spoken. The Italians at this day by like arrogance called the Frenchman, Spaniard, Dutch, English, and all other bred behither their *mountains* Apennines Tramontani, as who would say '*barbarous*'

Cacozelia

Love's Labour's Lost, V.ii.402-409

Arte, 3.22

O never will I trust to *speeches* penn'd,
Nor to the motion of a school-boy's tongue;
No, never come in vizard to my friend;
Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song;
Taffeta *phrases*, silken terms precise,
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce *affection*
Figures pedantical: these summer flies
Have blown me full of maggot ostentation.

Hamlet, II.ii..447

nor no matter in the *phrase* that might indict the
author of *affectation*.

Tautologia

Love's Labour's Lost, IV.ii.55-56

will sometimes affect the *letter*, for it *argues*
facility: 'The preyful princess pierced and prick'd a
pretty pleasing pricket'

Ye have another intollerable ill manner of *speech*,
by which the Greeks' original we may call Fond
Affectation. And is when we affect new words and
phrases other than good speakers and writers
in any language, or than custom, hath allowed;
and is the common fault of young *scholars* not
half well studied before they come from their
universities and schools.

Arte, 3.22

Many of our English makers use it too much, yet
we confess it doth not ill but prettily becomes
the metre.... For such composition makes the
metre *run away smoother*, and passes from the
lips with more *facility* by iteration of a *letter* than
by alteration.

Surplusage

Romeo and Juliet, III.ii.52

I saw the wound, I *saw it with mine eyes*

The Merry Wives of Windsor, I.i.136

He hears with *his ears*

Arte 3.22

Also the Poet or maker's speech becomes vicious
and unpleasant by nothing more than using
too much surplusage.... The first surplusage the
Greeks call Pleonasmus,—I call him Too Full
Speech—and is no great fault. As one should
say, 'I heard it *with mine ears*, and *saw it with*
mine eyes,' as if a man could hear with his heels,
or see with his nose.

“Jet”

Twelfth Night, II.ii.29-30

Arte. 3.22

Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him:
how he *jets* under his advanced plumes!

Arden of Feversham, I.30

And bravely *jets* it in his silken gown....

Thomas of Woodstock, I.i.99-105

Tell me, kind Cheyney
How does thy master, our good brother
Woodstock?
Plain Thomas, for by the rood so all men call him
For his plain dealing, and his simple clothing
Let others *jet* in silk and gold, says he
A coat of English frieze best pleaseth me.

All singularities or affected parts of a man's
behaviour seem undecent, as for a man to march
or *jet* in the street more stately

“Lion and Lamb”

Much Ado About Nothing, I.i.13-15

He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his
age: doing in the figure of a *lamb*, the feats of a
lion.”

Othello, II.i.111-115

You are pictures sent out of doors,
Bells in our parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and hussies in your
beds.

Arte, 3.24

And touching a person, we may say it is comely
for a man to be a *lamb* in the house and a *lion* in
the field..... we limit the comely parts of a woman
to consist of four points, that is to be a shrew in
the kitchen, a saint in the Church, an angel at the
board, and an ape in bed..... .

Indent (Contract)

I Henry VI, I.iii.86-87

Shall we buy Treason and *indent* with Fears,
When they have lost and forfeited themselves.

Arte, 3.24

Right in so negotiating with Princes we ought
to seek their favour by humility and not by way
of sternness, not to traffick with them by way of
indent or condition, but frankly and by manner of
submission to their wills, for princes may be led
not driven.

Nature

The Winter's Tale, IV.iv.81ff

Arte, 3.24

Perdita....The fairest flowers of the *season*....
Are our *carnations* and streaked *gillivors*....Which
some call nature's bastards.

Polixenes You see sweet maid, we marry...a
gentler scion to the wildest stock...by bud of
nobler race. This is an *art*....Which doth mend
nature – change it rather; but....The *Art* itself is
nature.

Perdita....So it is.

Polixenes. Then make your garden rich in
gillivors/And do not call them bastards.

In some cases we say art is an aid and coadjutor
to nature....And the gardener by his *art* will
not only make a herb or flower or fruit come forth
in his own *season* without impediment but will
also embellish the same in virtue, shape, odour
and taste, that *nature* of itself would never have
done: as to make the single *gilliflowre* or marigold,
or daisy, double, and the white rose, red, yellow or
carnation.

Grammatical Criticism: the “falsifying” of accent to serve the cadence or the “wrenching” of words to help the rhyme

2 Henry IV, III.ii.278-279

He is not his art's *craft's master*: he does not do
it right.

Arte, 1.9

it is a sign that such a maker is not copious
[competent] in his own language, or (as you are
wont to say) not half his *craft's master*.

Indirect Attribution

I Henry VI, 1.viii. 23-5

In memory of her, when she is dead....
Her ashes, in an urn more precious...
Than the rich-jewelled coffer of Darius.

Arte, 1.8

[Puttenham commends the recognition and
generosity of princes towards poets (with
possibility a plea to the Queen in respect of his
own works)], “In what price the noble poems of
Homer were held by Alexander the Great.....by
day carried in the rich jewel coffer of Darius.

These examples are a small fraction of those available whereby Puttenham's quotations can be seen to be taken from works (and not just Shakespeare's) written and in circulation before Puttenham's publication date of 1589. Puttenham therefore provides vital pieces of evidence for the dating of works, and these rule out William Shaksper of Stratford-Upon-Avon as the author.



Endnotes

- ¹ All references herein to the *Arte* are to Frank Whigham & Wayne A. Rebhorn, eds., *The Art of English Poesy by George Puttenham: A Critical Edition* (Cornell U. P., 2007). The *Arte* is divided into three Books, each of which is further divided into chapters. Citations are given to Book and chapter, e.g., 3.19.
- ² W.L. Rushton, *Shakespeare and "The Arte of English Poesie"* (Henry Young and Sons, 1909). I owe Charles Willis my thanks for alerting me to this book (and supplying a copy).
- ³ I note that Whigham and Rebhorn, while quoting from C.M. Willis, *Shakespeare and George Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie* (2003) with its prominent references to Rushton's book, curiously do not seem to have read it, let alone acknowledge it or make use any great use of it: perhaps the fundamental "flaw" of Rushton's book (that the plays written after 1589 owe grammatical construction and ideas to *Arte*) was so obvious as to be dangerous to their schema. On their page 212 they quote Puttenham's instruction to his readers: "But chiefly in your courtly ditties take heed that you use not these manner of long polysyllables and especially that ye finish not your verse with them as *retribution, restitution, remuneration, recapitulation* and such like, for they smatch [taste of] more the school of common players than of any delicate poet lyric or elegiac." One authority suggests only two uses of "restitution" (by Gascoigne and Marlowe) can be found in plays before 1590, but Oxfordians will note four uses of the word (three in verse and one in prose dialogue) and eight uses of "remuneration" (only one in verse; the other seven are all in prose dialogue in *Love's Labour's Lost* alone). Perhaps other examples can be found in Oxford's earlier plays.
- ⁴ According to most authorities, *The Arte* was substantially written by 1583, although not published until 1589 – ed.
- ⁵ Whigham & Rebhorn, 52 ff.
- ⁶ Id., 31ff.
- ⁷ I have not been able to check seven or so further references to Gascoigne to see if Puttenham quotes accurately from them.
- ⁸ Ennius, as translated by E.H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* (Harvard U. P., 1935).

⁹ Gager, hypertext edition by Dana F. Sutton, University of California, Irvine.

¹⁰ Professor Martin Wiggins the co-author of the magisterial *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue* readily acknowledged that this Puttenham-esque rendition clearly showed Puttenham's method of work. When I suggested that he applied the same approach to the "Shakespeare" examples below (to prove that the plays were written much too early for the 'orthodox' dating theories), he replied that he had no interest in any such "debate": "I am not going to be drawn into a fruitless discussion of that research [of the dating] at large." I suggested that if he disagreed and held to any 'orthodox' view, he would have to refute and destroy each and every one of the references which Rushton and I call in evidence.

¹¹ George Saintsbury, *A History of English Criticism* (Blackwood, 1922), 33-34.

¹² The majority of these dates are taken from Kevin Gilvary, ed., *Dating Shakespeare's Plays* (Parapress, 2011).

